

To Whom May Concern:

I am writing today to submit my response to the request for public input on the important issue of police reform and specifically, Bill S.2820. First, I would like to say that I was disheartened and angered over what occurred in the senate last week. The lack of transparency and expedience in the handling of this momentous bill is unbelievable! It is hard to comprehend how the people whom we have elected into such important positions could simply ignore the rights of so many. The attempt to push this bill through without stakeholder involvement was a travesty. Thank you for seeking public input and for making an attempt to listen to the thousands of individuals who will be gravely affected by this bill.

I am a police officer with over 29 years of experience and I am deeply disturbed by much of what is proposed in Bill S.2820. I, like 99.9% of all police officers, work hard to serve the community in which I work and live to the best of my ability. I, like so many others, am angry over the unjust and immoral actions of a few bad police officers who have acted without regard for law and the rights of others. And I, like so many other good police officers, am tired of being painted with the same brush and deemed untrustworthy, unethical, racist and essentially public enemy because of the actions of a few. It is time for our political leaders to stand up for the men and women in law enforcement who work tirelessly to protect the citizens of the commonwealth and stop using incidents that occur thousands of miles away as a means to further their political careers.

In the interest of your time I would like to address a few bulleted items for consideration:

Training:

Massachusetts ranks 48th (2nd from the bottom) in terms of funding for training for police officers. In 2018 a vote was taken to cut funding for police by \$1,000,000. How are we (law enforcement) expected to be held to the highest of standards, which I wholeheartedly agree should be the case), when our political leaders are unwilling to provide us with the funding and tool necessary to perform at our best. The bill speaks to reform but nothing about providing law enforcement with the tools to be more successful. Section 4 references mandatory training on the history of slavery, lynching and racist institutions. Are the political leaders saying that racism only exists in law enforcement? Why are all other government entities excluded from such training?

Schools sharing information with SROs:

Have we already forgotten about Sandy Hook, Parkland, Columbine and the countless other mass murders in schools around the country? The provision that prevents school personnel from sharing information with School Resource Officers is beyond comprehension and goes against common sense. The partnerships between schools and SROs has proven to be invaluable. Limiting the level at which those groups can communicate will certainly decrease safety of all students in the schools.

QI:

The elimination of QI will have devastating financial impacts on our communities and **ALL** of the municipal employees, not just police officers. The potential consequences are unknown but it is obvious that if this is allowed to pass we will see a flood of frivolous law suits by unscrupulous attorneys and individuals looking to sue anytime they feel they have been mistreated. This section was copied from an email authored by Attorney Lenny Kesten, an expert on QI- - "QUALIFIED Immunity does NOT protect illegal actions by police officers. Rather it safeguards ALL public officials in situations where the law is unclear. The doctrine allows lawsuits to proceed if a government official had fair notice that conduct was unlawful, but acted anyway. This common sense and reasonable approach explains why those

seeking to abolish or modify QI CANNOT point to ANY situations in MA where wrongful conduct by police officers has been protected by the doctrine. As written in Bill S.2800, abolishing or modifying qualified immunity will have important negative, unintended consequences for ALL MA citizens, courts, and public employees, not just police officers.”

The passage of this bill with the QI language as written must not be allowed to go through. The harm caused will be immeasurable.

In this time, more than ever, we need true leadership from our politicians. I hope the House will also be persuaded to reject the Bill or fix it to remove the portions that will have serious unintended consequences. I thank you for the opportunity to submit my comments.

Respectfully,

Kevin Lennon
Barnstable, MA